



Meal Supplements (Snacks) under National School Lunch Program

WHAT IS THE MEAL SUPPLEMENT (SNACK) PROGRAM?

The Meal Supplement (Snack) Component of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federal program to reimburse schools for providing nutritious snacks to children in after-school programs. Like all federal child nutrition programs, it is authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In California, the program is administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM?

For children, the Snack Program provides a nutritious snack during after-school hours care. For parents, the program offers a convenient method of providing a nutritionally balanced snack for their children after the school day ends. For schools, the program enhances children's learning abilities by contributing to their physical and mental well-being. Studies have shown that children whose nutritional needs are met have fewer attendance and discipline problems and are more attentive to learning.

WHAT TYPE OF SNACK MUST BE OFFERED?

A reimbursable snack consists of full servings of any two of the following four food components:

- Fluid milk;
- Meat or meat alternate;
- Fruit, vegetable, or 100% juice; and
- Grain or bread product.

The components may be served in any combination, except that juice may not be served when milk is the only other component. Portion sizes for various age groups can be found on the "Meal Supplement Chart for Children" in the Code of Federal Regulations.

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE ELIGIBLE TO SERVE SNACKS?

To be eligible for reimbursement under the NSLP, an after-school care program must meet the following criteria:

- The program is operated by a school district or agency that participates in the NSLP;
- The purpose of the program is to provide structured, supervised, regularly scheduled care in an after-school setting; and
- The program includes education or enrichment activities.

Reimbursement will be provided only for snacks served in programs that operate after the child's school day has ended. Snacks served before or during the child's school day, on weekends, on holidays, or during vacation periods are not reimbursable.

HOW ARE SNACKS CLAIMED FOR REIMBURSEMENT?

Schools may claim reimbursement for one snack per child per day. Children are eligible to participate through age 18; if a student turns age 19 during the school year, reimbursement may be claimed for that student's snacks during the remainder of the school year. Schools may also claim reimbursement for snacks served to individuals, regardless of age, who are determined to be mentally or physically disabled.

If a site is located in the attendance area of a school in which at least 50 percent of the enrolled children are approved for free or reduced price meals, that site may claim reimbursement at the free rate for all snacks served in after-school care programs. This is called "area eligibility" and follows policies established for area eligibility under the Summer Food Service Program. In an area-eligible site, snacks must be served without charge and are claimed at the free rate, regardless of each individual student's eligibility status for lunch or breakfast. Area eligibility may be based on

the school's own free and reduced price enrollment, or on that of another school in whose attendance area the after-school care program is located.

In sites that are not area-eligible, snacks are claimed according to the student's eligibility category (free, reduced price, or paid), and prices may be charged for paid or reduced price snacks. The maximum amount that can be charged for a reduced price snack is 15 cents.

Sponsors submit monthly snack counts as part of their regular monthly claim for the lunch and/or breakfast program. There is also a snack addendum to the claim, which is necessary because of USDA reporting requirements regarding reimbursable snacks.

WHAT RECORDS MUST BE MAINTAINED?

At a minimum, sponsors participating under this provision must maintain the following records:

- If all meals are claimed free, documentation of the site's area eligibility;
- For all other sites, documentation of eligibility for all children for whom free and reduced price snacks are claimed;
- Meal counts (total snacks for area-eligible sites; meal counts by eligibility category for others);
- Documentation of individual children's attendance on a daily basis; and
- Documentation of compliance with the meal pattern requirements.

As with all school nutrition program records, these records must be maintained for a minimum of three years. In the event of an audit, the records may be required beyond the three-year limit until all audit issues have been resolved.

WHAT TYPES OF AGENCIES MAY PARTICIPATE?

Public and private, nonprofit schools that participate in the NSLP are eligible to be reimbursed for after-school snacks. Also eligible are public or private, nonprofit residential child care institutions (e.g., group homes, juvenile halls, orphanages, etc.) as long as they participate in the NSLP. However, an individual site need not serve lunch in order to also serve snacks; if a school food authority operates the NSLP in *any* of the schools under its jurisdiction, then *all* its schools are eligible to provide after-school snacks.

WHERE CAN WE GET ASSISTANCE?

As with all school nutrition programs, nutritionists and program staff from the California Department of Education are available to provide free technical assistance and guidance on how to operate a Snack Program.

WHOM DO WE CONTACT?

To request an application package, or for more information, write:

**California Department of Education
Nutrition Services Division
School Nutrition Programs Unit
560 J Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814-2342**

or call (916) 323-1580 or (800) 952-5609.